

# Healthy Seaports Deliver More Than Goods

By Kurt Nagle, President/CEO, AAPA

**T**oday, as we confront a host of national challenges — chief among them, recovery from the current economic crisis — there is a clear and critical role for our seaports.

Deep-draft ports — coastal and fresh water — are dynamic, vibrant centers of trade and commerce that rely on partnerships, both public (e.g., national & local governments) and private (e.g., shipping lines, tenants, investors & stakeholders).

In the U.S., seaports invest more than \$2.5 billion annually to maintain and enhance their infrastructure. However, this commitment isn't being adequately matched by the federal government. Many of the land and water connections are insufficient and outdated, affecting the ports' ability to move the nation's goods. In turn, this hurts business, hurts workers and hurts our national economy.

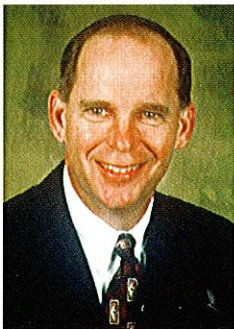
Our seaports need increased federal infrastructure investments that will correct this imbalance while delivering much needed economic prosperity to the country. Recent estimates are that, despite the current downturn, the volume of international trade through our ports will rebound and grow dramatically in the years ahead.

## SEAPORTS DELIVER PROSPERITY

Seaports are so much more than just safe havens in rough waters. They're centers of commerce and trade. They're busy and dynamic trans-

portation hubs. And they're constantly adapting to meet ever-changing global trade demands.

Seaports help us build and grow international trade, and strengthen



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local and national economies. They provide high paying jobs and help increase our standard of living. And they connect us with the rest of the world — as the world grows smaller and our mutual dependence on trade becomes more important.

This is why keeping them modern, navigable, safe and properly supported is such a core priority for AAPA — and must be for the nation.

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS HUGE

In 2007, U.S. seaports were responsible for nearly \$3.2 trillion in economic activity; generated more than \$212 billion in tax revenue; moved more than 99% of the country's overseas cargo; handled more than 2 billion tons of cargo; and supported more than 13 million American jobs, accounting for \$649 billion in personal income.

As broad and as big as their impact is, ports also serve as local economic engines. Just consider the location of the largest U.S. metropolitan centers — such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, Seattle, Miami — and you'll notice a high percentage have ports that handle ocean-going vessels. Centers of international trade like these are magnets for business and economic

development. Consequently, when an economic shot in the arm is needed more than ever, investing in port-related infrastructure is critical.

## THE FEDERAL ROLE

We must ensure there's adequate, safe and congestion-free access to our ports from land. So must we ensure there's modern, navigable waterside access — with channels that are deep and wide enough to handle today's modern vessels, and marine highways to provide transportation options for moving cargo between ports.

These priorities should be included in a long-term, national transportation plan that addresses freight mobility, congestion and productivity. Without such a plan — and the necessary investment to support it — America will be less competitive, consumers will pay higher prices and the economy will suffer.

AAPA believes the federal government should play the appropriate role by helping enhance the movement of goods to help America regain its competitive footing.

Addressing goods movement challenges and alleviating freight congestion must be a top priority in the upcoming surface transportation legislation to help ensure that U.S. farmers, manufacturers and other businesses remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Seaports can play a critical role in our national economic recovery; however, connecting infrastructure to ports requires higher levels of federal investment to create jobs, alleviate congestion and deliver prosperity. ■